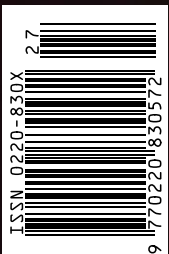


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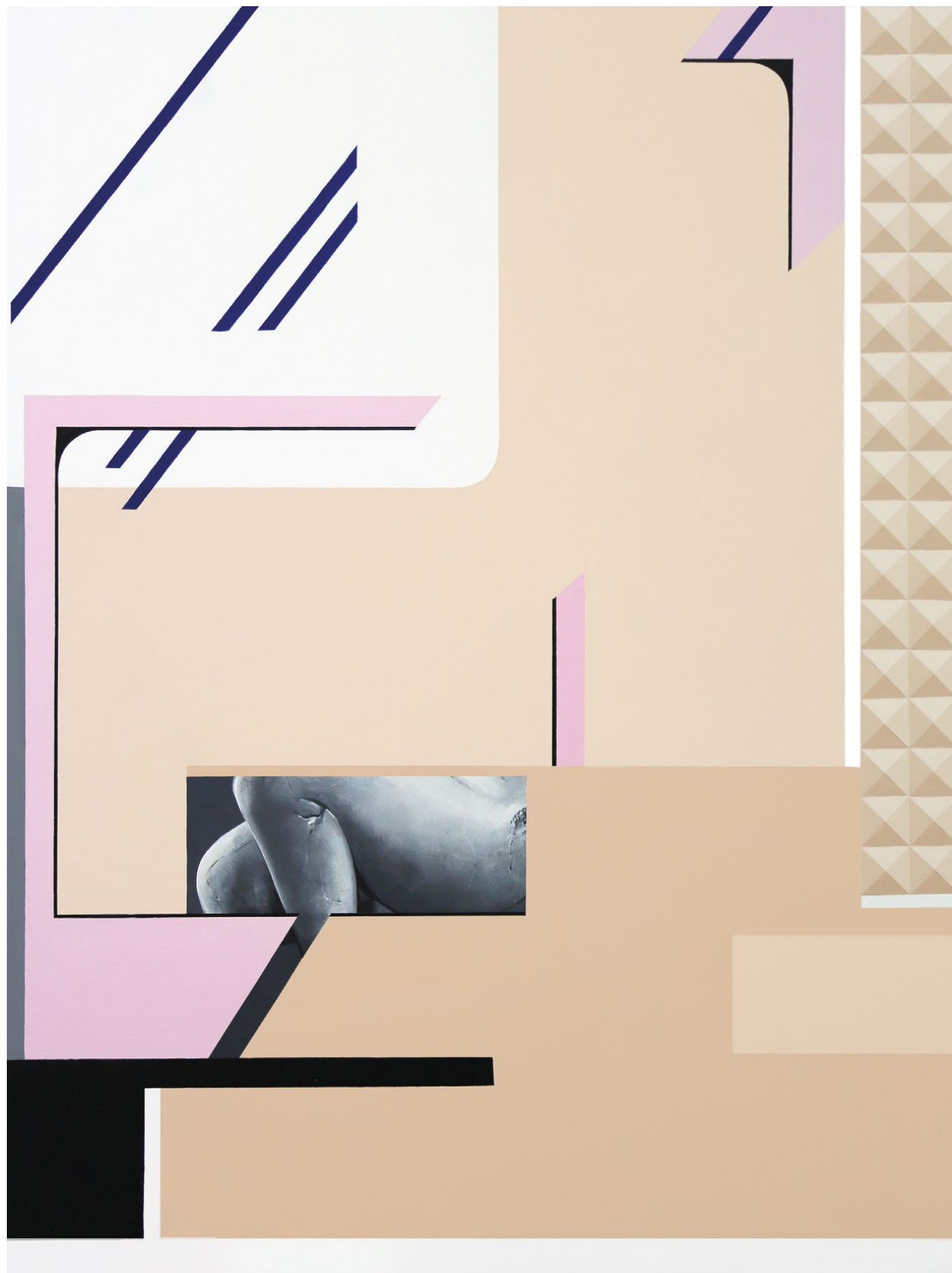


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Peter Atkins, Eric Bridgeman, Simon Denny, Cherine Fahd,
Fiona Foley, Theaster Gates, Alice Lang, James Lemon,
Dan McCabe, Colin McCahon, Genevieve Felix Reynolds,
SPRING1883, Sydney Contemporary, Ambera Wellmann & more

FORECAST GENEVIEVE FELIX REYNOLDS

WRITTEN by MARIAM ARCILLA



Sydney painter Genevieve Felix Reynolds creates crisp, immaculate scenes that echo the splintered minds of our post-digital age, while relaying a requiem for the analogue. Taking cues from history books, online archives and architectural environments, Felix Reynolds populates her work with a geometric throb of contrasting colours, culturally laden imagery, and animated gestures that quarrel with positive and negative space. Hailing from Brisbane – she has a Bachelor of Fine Art with First Class Honours, and a Bachelor of Photography, from Queensland College of Art – she grew up in a creative family: her parents work between painting, sculpture and photography, while her sister is an architect. A childhood spent around galleries, studios, travel and art discussions paved the way for a career in art. Felix Reynolds has since exhibited in New York, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. In her current series, *Health*, the artist imbues her tightly rendered surfaces with iconic motifs and banal items – from disembodied torsos, placeless archways and ancient history artefacts to drinking straws, medicinal tablets and body adornments. While some images allude to social and historical metaphors, she is adamant about leaving enough ambiguity to allow viewers to form their own interpretations.

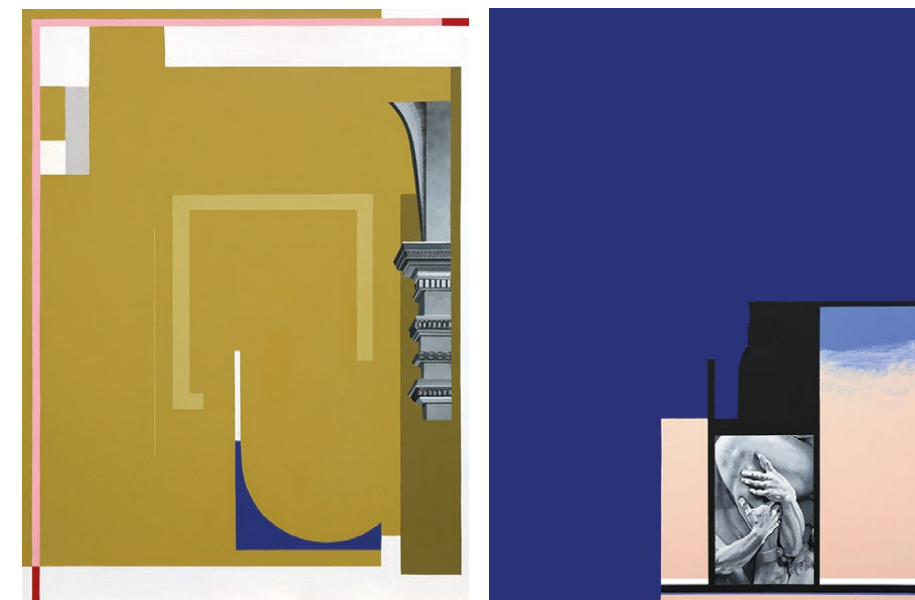
There's a parametric energy with your paintings – the way visuals and symbolisms swing between clinical and playful, classicism and post-internet. What are you exploring here?

I'm investigating a couple of things. One is flatness in painting, in relation to the pervasiveness of the digital screen. I'm influenced by 20th-century explorations of Cartesian space in art and in architecture, and I view the screen as a new framework for abstraction. Combining abstract geometry with references to the physical facilitates navigation between the tangible world and the virtual. I want to emphasise this growing divide.

Another topic is history and its record. I'm intrigued by the long journey of an object from 'buried rubble' to 'precious artefact'. In a 21st-century context, this is a journey towards digital immortality: many public museums have online databases of their collections, and when they don't, this task is performed on social media. An object that was buried has its afterlife in 'the cloud'. I think of this process as the translation of the physical and sculptural into the abstract and pictorial. I'm exploring how painting and photography can span or bridge this dichotomy.

How do you weave these dichotomies into a visual narrative?

I spend a lot of time digging around websites and databases and collecting photos for my archives. I use collage to create compositions from collected



Left to right
GENEVIEVE
FELIX REYNOLDS
Miracle Mile, 2018
gouache and acrylic
on panel
61 x 46 cm

GENEVIEVE
FELIX REYNOLDS
Godflesh, 2018
gouache and acrylic on
aluminium composite
90 x 67 cm

Opposite
GENEVIEVE
FELIX REYNOLDS
Adobe, 2018
gouache and acrylic on
aluminium composite
90 x 67 cm

Courtesy the artist,
Galerie pompom, Sydney
and Nicholas Thompson
Gallery, Melbourne

photos, textures and shapes. Then these collages are fed back into the computer, where I continue to play with colour combinations and geometry. Each composition eventually has dozens of iterations, and one of these becomes a painting. I'm interested in the finality of paint as the antipathy of the digital's infiniteness.

So, it's like an excavation process?

Yes, I think of this process as pseudo-scientific, a kind of personal archaeology. Painting is a way of framing and chronicling this information. I approach representational imagery in the same way as abstract imagery. I'm guided by a formal decision-making process, but it's also an intuitive response. When a pill is painted next to an ancient Egyptian glass bead, it kind of forces a parallel reading.

Left to right
GENEVIEVE
FELIX REYNOLDS
Vague gestures, 2019
acrylic on canvas
107 x 77 cm

GENEVIEVE
FELIX REYNOLDS
Health, 2019
acrylic and flashe
on canvas
175 x 125 cm

Courtesy the artist and
Galerie pompom, Sydney



I approach representational imagery in the same way as abstract imagery. I'm guided by a formal decision-making process, but it's also an intuitive response.

On that, I've noticed parallels of blue across your practice – you tend to toss between cobalt, periwinkle, teal and aqua. Why does blue play a starring role in some of these works?

I like spatial colours, and I think blue is one of the biggest and eeriest colours. It represents absence and the infinite, like the 'blue screen of death' on TVs and projectors, or the deep ocean, or the sky. We've lived with expanses of blue forever.

And this expanse continues in this post-internet age, when digital devices flood our eyes and minds with ready-made visuals and fully served ideas. How does your work respond to this?

White space, horizontal and vertical lines, boxed-in photographs... we're so used to this vernacular now, through the consumption of books, websites, magazines, museum displays, billboards. I want to exploit these conventions and see what this simplification of space can say about painting and the two-dimensional.

You've loaded your latest series with motifs like pills, pearls, seedlings, Ancient Greek objects, and animal parts. Can you talk about the significance behind some of the items?

There are personal symbols in there, but they're mashed up with found photos and references to art history. The red and black South American seeds are from my childhood garden, and a squiggle is borrowed from a friend's sculptural practice. The horse hindquarters are from an old Jenny Watson painting that she in turn borrowed from a magazine. In another painting, there's a cartoonised Picasso minotaur, a very beefy classical torso, and a camo-patterned shoelace. In this case, I was playing with the relevance of masculine archetypes.

Your parents, Marian Drew and Bruce Reynolds, are both acclaimed artists, so you grew up surrounded by art. How has this shaped you?

Having artists for parents means you're not their first priority – I honestly mean this in the best possible way. [Laughs] They were always in their studio, or lecturing, or travelling, and my sister and I were the little adults accompanying them. We often went to galleries and my opinions were always taken seriously. It taught me that ideas are bigger than people, and that exploration is best. Becoming an artist seemed like a no-brainer. What else would we talk about over dinner?

You were recently awarded a Palazzo Monti Residency, which will take you to Brescia, Italy in 2020. How will you kick things off? Any side-trips planned?

I'm so excited. Brescia's layered architectural history is so conspicuous, and the palazzo itself dates back to the 13th century. I'll take a good camera and document the hell out of it. I've got some side-trips planned, too; the Castelvecchio Museum in Verona is at the top. I've got a thing for its renovator, Carlo Scarpa. I'm also organising a flight to Turkey at the moment, for ancient art and ruins. A pop-up exhibition in Rome is in the works too. Stay tuned! **V**

Genevieve Felix Reynolds is currently showing at Galerie pompom, Sydney until August 4, 2019.

Genevieve Felix Reynolds is represented by Galerie pompom, Sydney and Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Melbourne.

galeriepompom.com

nicholasthompsongallery.com.au

[@geneviefelixreynolds](https://www.instagram.com/geneviefelixreynolds)